McKeithen Sharply Raps DA's Seeking Pay Raises

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Garrison, However, Not Target of Blast

Gov. John J. McKeithen Saturday took dead aim on the state's district attorneys, but was quick to pluck his old political ally, Orleans Parish District Atty. Jim Garrison, out of the line of fire.

In a sharp denunciation of the district attorneys who are pressing for pay raises in the State Legislature and who have accused McKeithen of reneging on a promise to them, McKeithen denied he broke any promises. "I told them," said McKeithen, "that I considered it inopportune for them to seek pay raises when I had a Civil Service pay raise on my desk which I could not sign."

Later McKeithen, who made the remarks at an impromptu press conference in a dressing room at Municipal Auditorium where he had delivered the commencement address for the Louisiana State University Medical School, emphasized he wasn't talking about the controversial Garrison. He said he didn't think Garrison was seeking a pay raise.

The governor said he appointed Nathaniel C. Curtis Jr. as project director for the domed stadium design project because he had been told that the architects had been having trouble deciding who would take the leadership role.

CHARITY HOSPITAL CASE

McKeithen, in a wide-ranging press conference held while the new LSU medical graduates gathered with their families for congratulations, also spoke of Gordon Novel, urban renewal, the new grant-in-aid bill, the state highway department and Jimmy Taylor.

McKeithen said he would have been more vehement with the district attorneys when they came to his office had be known of the situation at Charity Hos-

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M'KEITHEN RAPS PAY HIKE QUEST

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pital, which nearly prompted a walkout by over 340 nurses.

In an aside, McKeithen said he wanted to thank the nurses and the members of the Roman Catholic clergy who averted the walkout. The governor said he would confer with the Board of Administrators of Charity on what can be done to help the nurses' pay situation.

McKeithen said he would "leave the Legislature alone if the district attorneys will." The governor said the aisles have been thick with DAs during the present session of the Legislature.

He said he hoped that the DAs would allow him to sign the pay raise bill, but suspend it until the $16 million can be found to aid the Civil Service employes.

The governor commented very briefly on the new grant-in-aid bill that will give aid to needy children who wish to attend private schools. He said simply that when he ran for governor he committed himself to support the grants-in-aid and he would not attempt to judge whether the bill would bring quality education

The governor said he was not happy about communistic and atheistic speakers making speeches "anywhere — particularly our college campuses."

McKeithen said he, of course, regretted Communistic speakers of the campuses, but he didn't know about atheists. "If a fellow wants to go to hell," said McKeithen, "there's not much you can do about it."

Asked if he would veto the bill banning Communists and atheists from the campuses, McKeithen said, "I'm not sure whether it is a bill or resolution so I don't know."

The governor was asked if the State Highway Department has plans completed for the Riverfront Expressway. City Council president John J. Petre called on the State Highway Department to reveal them if they are ready.

"I presume they do," said McKeithen with a smile. "If they don't, we're in need of a new Highway Department."

The governor also said:

—It is beginning to look as though Louisiana will not be able to extradite Gordon Novel from Ohio. "I don't know why either," said McKeithen. "But we're not getting any cooperation out of Gov. Rhodes."

—He is for local option urban renewal. But how much further he would go—such as pushing it at the next Legislative session — the governor said, "I don't know."

—The Public Affairs Research Council is the one that is "hypersensitive" and not him. The governor said he had nearly 1,000 people—including some members of PAR — congratulate him on calling PAR's hand about the great number of added government employes.

McKeithen said PAR should come forward and try to help the state government as the Council for a Better Louisiana has done. He mentioned CABL's loaning him Ed Stagg, its executive director, as his executive secretary.

The governor charged that PAR's "money and energies are being wasted" and that PAR is now hurting the state "by breaking down what little confidence there is in state government."

—Private financing is not possible for the domed stadium. McKeithen said this "is already behind us—the people voted overwhelmingly for public financing."

—He hopes that Jimmy Taylor, fullback for the Green Bay Packers, does sign with the New Orleans Saints. McKeithen said he suggested to the Saints' management that it sign Taylor, but he does not know if Taylor has been signed. "I hope he does sign," said McKeithen.